

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6796

INFO AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY

USCINCSO

AMEMOASSY GUATEMALA PRIORITY

S E C R E T MANAGUA 1577

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, HO, NU

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT SOMOZA MEETS WITH FORMER HONDURAN CHIEF OF
STATE LOPEZ

1. GON PRESIDENT SOMOZA ADVISED ME TODAY THAT HE HAD MET ON
TUESDAY, APRIL 22 WITH FORMER HONDURAN CHIEF OF STATE GENERAL
OSWALDO LOPEZ ARELLANO (THE MEETING WAS AT THE SPECIFIC REQUEST
OF LOPEZ).

2. SOMOZA SAID THAT LOPEZ ADVISED HIM THAT HE HAD INDICATED HIS
PREFERENCE TO VACATE THE CHIEF OF STATE POSITION RATHER THAN GJCV
THE INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE THE POWER OF ATTORNEY WHICH THEY WERE
REQUESTING. LOPEZ STATED THAT THE POWER OF ATTORNEY WHICH WAS
DESIRED WAS SO SWEEPING AND ALL-INCLUSIVE THAT IT COULD HAVE BEEN
USED TO INVESTIGATE ALL OF HIS BANK ACCOUNTS AND FINANCIAL HOLD-
INGS, AND IN THE HANDS OF ADVERSARIES, "COULD BE USED TO
DESTROY HIM". SOMOZA STATED THAT LOPEZ REITERATED THAT HE DID NOT,
REPEAT NOT, RECEIVE THE MONEY WHICH IS ALLEGED TO HAVE BEEN GIVEN
AS A BRIBE BY UNITED BRANDS.

3. LOPEZ IS HOPEFUL THAT HE WILL BE ABLE TO LIVE PEACEFULLY IN

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HONDURAS, BUT HE INTENDS TO MAINTAIN AN EXTREMELY LOW PROFILE, AND

HE SPECIFICALLY ASKED SOMOZA IF IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO COME TO NICARAGUA "IF HIS (LOPEZ'S); ENEMIES IN HONDURAS TRIED TO KILL HIM". SOMOZA INDICATED THAT WHILE HE HOPED SUCH A CONTINGENCY WOULD NOT ARISE THAT LOPEZ COULD COME TO NICARAGUA IF HE WERE IN EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES.

4. PRESIDENT SOMOZA SAID THAT THE MEETING WITH LOPEZ WAS WITH THE KNOWLEDGE AND CONSENT OF THE NEW HONDURAN CHIEF OF STATE, MELGAR,

AND THAT MELGAR HAD ASKED LOPEZ TO COMMUNICATE TO SOMOZA HIS DESIRE AND THE DESIRE OF THE LT. COL.'S IN THE SUPERIOR DEFENSE COUNCIL TO HAVE THE BEST POSSIBLE RELATIONS WITH NICARAGUA. MELGAR ALSO REQUESTED THAT SOMOZA CONTACT ON HIS BEHALF, GUATEMALAN PRESIDENT LAUGERUD AND SALVADORAN PRESIDENT MOLINA, AND ASSURE THEM OF THE DESIRE OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT OF HONDURAS TO MAINTAIN CORDIAL RELATIONS WITH GUATEMALA AND TO ASSURE MOLINA THAT THERE WOULD BE NO THREATENING BORDER ACTIVITIES.

5. LOPEZ EVALUATED THE LT. COL.S AS CONTAINING "SOME LEFTISTS" BUT THAT THE LEADERS OF THE SUPERIOR DEFENSE COUNCIL WERE GOING TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO HOLD A MIDDLE IDEOLOGICAL LINE.

6. LOPEZ ALSO TOLD SOMOZA THAT MELGAR AND THE LT. COLONELS HAD ASSURED HIM (LOPEZ) THAT HIS PROPERTY AND POSSESSIONS IN HONDURAS WOULD BE SAFE.

7. SOMOZA SAID THAT LOPEZ EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE UNITED BRANDS MATTER WOULD HAVE A "SERIOUS BOOMERANG EFFECT "AGAINST U.S. MULTI-NATIONAL CORPORATIONS. HE SPECIFICALLY SUGGESTED THAT IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE THAT THE US EMBASSY IN TEGUCIGALPA SHOULD TAKE PROTECTIVE SECURITY MEASURES AGAINST ANY POTENTIAL RIOTS OR MANIFESTATIONS DIRECTED AGAINST THE EMBASSY AS A SYMBOL OF US MULTI-NATIONAL CORPORATIONS.

8. SOMOZA HAS CONTACTED BOTH THE PRESIDENT OF GUATEMALA AND THE PRESIDENT OF EL SALVADOR AND PASSED TO THEM THE MESSAGE REGARDING RELATIONS REQUESTED BY CHIEF OF STATE MELGAR.

9. COMMENT. SOMOZA BELIEVES THAT IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO FULLY ASSESS THE EFFECT OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS IN HONDURAS. SOMOZA SAYS
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THAT IN HIS OPINION THE LT. COLONELS DO NOT HAVE THE CAPACITY TO RUN THE GOVERNMENT. THE FUTURE, WILL THEREFORE, TO A LARGE DEGREE DEPEND ON WHO THEY ARE ABLE TO PLACE IN POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY. SOMOZA APPEARS TO BELIEVE THAT MELGAR IS REASONABLY STABLE

AND WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION.
SHELTON

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